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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

December 6, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VIRGINIA FOXX to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

CONGRATULATING CONSUMERS ENERGY COMPANY ON ITS 125TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, it's my great honor to recognize and congratulate Consumers Energy Company on its 125th anniversary. On this day 125 years ago, Consumers Energy founders William A. Foote and Samuel Jarvis secured a street lighting franchise agreement with the city of Jackson, Michigan. What began as the illumination of a dozen streetlights has

endured 125 years of change, growth, and service. Today, Consumers Energy delivers electricity and natural gas to 6.8 million of Michigan's 10 million residents in all 68 counties of the State's Lower Peninsula.

For the past 125 years, Consumer Energy has operated under the timeless principle: provide customers with safe, reliable, and affordable energy service. This principle has played an integral role of improving the quality of life for generations of Michigan residents. It also has been responsible for the growth of businesses and industries which provide jobs for millions of the State's residents.

Since its beginning in 1886, the goal of Consumers Energy was to deliver power to homes and businesses in cities, towns, villages and even the most rural areas. In 1927, the company installed Michigan's first rural power line, the 7-mile Mason-Dansville line, thereby bringing power to rural farms for the first time.

Today, Consumers Energy continues a proud tradition as an industry and community leader. In celebration of its milestone anniversary, the company will award \$125,000 each to 10 communities for a total of \$1.25 million for programs and services that will strengthen those communities and touch the lives of thousands of our citizens.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Consumers Energy's 125th anniversary and wishing them continued growth and success in the future.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, there was a tough article in the Sun-

day, December 4, New York Times entitled, "How the Food Industry Eats Your Kids' Lunch." This has serious consequences for the 32 million children who rely on school lunches, and often the breakfast program as well. Unfortunately, when one-third of our children of school age, 6 to 19, are overweight or obese, this matters.

There's no denying that the institutional and political forces combine to favor giving our kids unhealthy food. It doesn't just shortchange the children and their families with huge medical costs in the future from obesity, from diabetes and other problems. It also poses problems for local farmers and the local economy.

The good news is that we know how to fix this. Without help from the Federal Government—or despite the Federal Government—there are areas where the local governments are leading. In 2001, there were only six programs that were farm-to-school, providing healthy produce and fruit that found its way into the schools. There are now more than 2,300 programs involving more than 10,000 schools across the country.

On this House floor, I have referenced a pilot project that I think is a model in Abernathy School in Portland, Oregon, which I am privileged to represent, but there are dozens more in my community. There are 160 edible gardens around Oregon. California led the way with special payments that are made to local school districts to provide opportunities to purchase local fruits and vegetables. It's been followed by similar programs in D.C. and Maine.

Now, this doesn't just deal with the health of kids. It also deals with the health of local economies. When you are able to buy fresh fruits and vegetables locally and put them into the schools, it has a significant multiplier effect. Each dollar there actually has more economic impact than a dollar spent on infrastructure or a dollar that

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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